

Gadara School Annual Report



2016



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Introduction

The Annual Report for **2016** is provided to the community of **Gadara School for Specific Purposes** as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self–assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

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Principal

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Message from the Principal

Our vision at Gadara School is that the students develop skills to become independent citizens in their local community. The School Plan captures the means that we as a school are facilitating this development in our students. The first strategic direction is student–centred and is intended to guarantee all students are actively engaged in meaningful, challenging and future focused learning experiences with teachers differentiating learning to meet the needs of all students in their classes. Our second direction acknowledges the importance of our community, and the intention to work with and access support from the community. Growing stronger relationships with our school and wider community is very important to the work we do in the development of our students to become independent and responsible members of their local community. Our third direction focusses on staff, and recognises the importance of having well trained teachers. Teachers have the ability to achieve great things and teacher quality is the single biggest influence on all students' educational attainment.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous school self–evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school's achievements and areas for development.

School background

School vision statement

We empower students to develop skills and strategies to become successful, independent citizens striving to reach their full potential in a supportive learning environment.

School context

Gadara School is part of the Department of Education schools in N.S.W. The school is located in Tumut and is part of the Cootamundra Network of schools. The school provides a dynamic and caring educational environment in which all students' access quality educational programs within a varied and balanced curriculum.

The school caters for students from Preschool to Year 12. The students present with a diverse range of disabilities, requiring individualised planning which is developed in consultation with parents and interagency groups. Students, parents and staff work as a team to create a positive school culture with high expectations. Education through collaboration is the cornerstone of Gadara School's philosophy.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading.

We have provided high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. The impact of key school strategies has improved learning, teaching and leading. The benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding can be seen in all aspects of the school, including classrooms, new programs implemented and added school facilities such as the development of the new Sensory room.

Our self-assessment process will assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

In the domain of **Learning** Gadara School is **Delivering**. Our efforts have primarily focused on curriculum and learning. The improved performance of the school in creating a positive and productive learning culture amongst staff and students has been a feature of our progress. The fundamental importance of wellbeing is providing an outstanding way to build a culture of trust, respect and valuing of each other. The results have been evident in the way that students are relating to each other and, importantly, in the increased engagement of students in learning. Attention to individual learning needs has been another component of our progress throughout the year. Planning and Review meetings with each student's parent/caregiver has been the focus in the development of Individualised Learning and Supports Plans for each student, addressing key learning issues for every student in the school.

In the domain of **Teaching** Gadara School is **Delivering**. Our major focus in this domain has been on ensuring all classrooms are well managed with students engaged in learning that is productive, rather than just busy work. Opportunities have been provided to staff members in relation to planning, teaching and growing as a school team. The use of technology for learning, the growing of teaching practice through classroom observations, reflections and feedback, and the development of expertise in literacy and numeracy programs and in new syllabuses, all highlight a teaching culture that is moving student learning. Importantly, staff are developing a whole school approach to evidence-based practice through their reflections and evaluations of work.

In the domain of **Leading** Gadara School is **working towards Delivering**. Our priorities have been to progress leadership and management practices and processes. The consistency and effectiveness of implementation of our key strategic directions throughout the year has been due to the development of some leadership capacity building across the school. This approach recognises that leadership development is central to the achievement of school excellence. The leadership development has begun to build the capabilities of staff to create a dynamic school learning culture.

The new approach to school planning, supported by the new funding model to schools, is starting to make a difference to our progress as a school. The achievements and identification of next steps are outlined in the following pages of this report. The use of the External School Review and our own self-assessment processes will further assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our School Plan leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/school-excellence-framework>

Strategic Direction 1

High expectations for student learning.

Purpose

To develop within a culture of high expectations learning that leads to students becoming independent and productive members of the community.

Overall summary of progress

All teachers continue to differentiate their curriculum delivery with processes to identify and address student learning needs. With the use of differentiated strategies there has been improvement in student learning with students engaged and producing improved educational outcomes.

Literacy programs are achieving higher quality learning experiences with all students engaged in the Accelerated Literacy program and associated activities. Staff are using PLAN and investigating the literacy and numeracy continuum and plotting where students sit within the continuum, looking at the clusters and gathering data to support the placement of the students on the continuums. Staff continue to implement TENs and we are slowly seeing growth in both literacy and numeracy.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Curriculum programs and teaching practices effectively develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of all students using evidence based teaching practices and innovative delivery mechanisms where appropriate which results in growth for all students along the continuum	Continued use of Accelerated literacy strategies Continued utilisation of TENs strategies in all numeracy programs. Continued engagement of the Speech pathologist to assist the teacher to develop communication strategies for identified students.	Speech pathologist support for all students \$6000 Socio-economic background Resources for Accelerated Literacy and TENs programs. \$2000 Socio-economic background Additional training and program development \$2700 Socio-economic background
Individual learning is supported by the effective use of school systems and community expertise and resources through contextual decision making and planning underpinned by high expectations.	Improved data collection and tracking systems. All students from K – Yr 8 are tracked on PLAN. Year 9 – Year 12 are tracked on Outcomes worksheets for selected subjects. Literacy growth is tracked on the Literacy continuum. TENs/SENA numeracy assessment of all students	Staff training and support in developing quality programs and assessment. \$4000 Beginning teacher funding

Next Steps

Ensuring all students have the ability to meaningfully communication both in school and in the community and what this will look like with the transition to NDIS.

Inclusion of the occupational therapist to facilitate student learning through the utilisation of the sensory room with appropriate programs.

Continue professional discussion and learning in literacy and numeracy.

Continued use and development of school's assessment schedule.

Professional learning as identified in staff PDPs in literacy, disability needs of students and personal development.



Strategic Direction 2

Promote a positive culture within the local community.

Purpose

To promote a positive culture and set of values based on expectations of support for the wellbeing of all within the school community.

Overall summary of progress

We continue to implement a whole school approach to wellbeing that is creating a positive teaching and learning environment. This approach to student wellbeing has been developed with defined behavioural expectations and reward system. Expectations of behaviour continue to be taught to students and related to the classroom and playground settings as well as the wider community. This has now fostered a more positive culture in which the school community shares and celebrates the successes of all student achievement. The school has continued to investigate suitable and appropriate programs to develop a comprehensive and inclusive framework to support the cognitive, emotional, social and physical wellbeing of students which will continue to improve individual and collective wellbeing.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
The school has in place a framework to support the cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual wellbeing of students, which measurably improves the individual and whole school wellbeing.	Partnerships with parents, families, local businesses and community organisations are developing well with many new local businesses now involved with the school and providing alternative work placements for the students.. Investigations into programs to support students wellbeing– social and emotional. From this investigation the school will commence 3 programs that will intertwine –So Safe, Celebrate Me and MindMatters in 2017. These programs will be supported by the Student Welfare teacher, the School Chaplain as well as. the classroom teachers.	Training and support for staff investigating and attending suitable programs. \$2000 Socio-economic background
Students are self-aware, build positive relationships and actively contribute to the school, the community and the society in which they live.	Students are more self-aware and are developing positive relationships with their school peers and following school rules. They are also actively contributing to the school and the community they live in through their involvement in work experience plus participation in many of the local community activities eg. ANZAC Dawn Service and March, Festival of the Falling Leaf parade, Lanterns in the Lagoon etc.. Continued implementation of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program (SAKGP) which has facilitated improved relationships between students and fosters a collaborative learning environment.	Continued resourcing of the SAKGP – kitchen, garden, science, art areas. Support for students undertaking the school to work program – SLSO support \$12000 Socio economic background \$1000 Aboriginal funding

Next Steps

Continue to build partnerships with parents, families, local businesses and community organisations to improve opportunities and outcomes for the students.

Continue to source potential community partners on the basis of their capacity to contribute to improved student achievement and/or wellbeing, that is support for the students undertaking work pathways or support in assisting at the school with the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program.

Use of the *School Communities National Partnership Community Engagement tools – Reflection and Planning Matrix* to plot where the school is now on this continuum and how we can continue to move towards Partnership.



Strategic Direction 3

Quality teaching and leadership.

Purpose

Build leadership capacity and consistent, high quality educational practices enabling quality educational delivery, consistent high standards and shared professional practices.

Overall summary of progress

The school staff continue to work collaboratively ensuring the continuity of learning for students with all teaching staff understanding the relationship between student engagement and successful learning. There continues to be a particular focus on improved teaching methods in literacy and numeracy, with professional learning activities focused on building teachers understandings of effective teaching strategies in these areas. This targeted professional learning has empowered staff to effectively plan and program differentiated pedagogy using Literacy and Numeracy Continuums and the use of data to promote achievement but also to further inform students' future learning.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
The teaching and leading staff are highly skilled and responsive, understand and value themselves and each other and contribute to a culture of high expectations.	Professional learning continues to be provided to build staff skills so that they are highly skilled and responsive to their students needs in numeracy through the training of most teaching staff in the TENs program, plus one teacher trained as a facilitator to train all remaining staff. Focusing on improving numeracy results through data collection and analysis leading to staff having high expectation for their students.	Staff training and support in developing quality numeracy programs. Teachers provide support to their peers across all classes. \$2000 Socio-economic background
The teaching staff demonstrate and share expertise, have very high levels of contemporary content knowledge and teaching practices, and rely on evidence based teaching strategies.	Literacy and Numeracy continuums used to guide individualised teaching and learning programs. A whole school assessment schedule is now in place with information for teachers about assessments and students achievements indicated on the continuums and PLAN. Discussion and sharing, informally and formally of teaching strategies and content of current programs and training.	Staff support to implement assessment schedule. \$1000 Socio-economic background

Next Steps

Staff to continue to participate in coaching and mentoring with the aim of promoting collaboration and professional sharing of evidence based teaching practice.

Continue to participate in professional learning, both locally and further afield so staff are able to meet the diversity of needs within the school population.

Continue to utilise the curriculum as a basis for ongoing staff discussions about the best ways to maximise student learning.

Staff PDPs are used to motivate improvements evidenced by the Australian Teaching Standards and personal goals.



Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
<p>Aboriginal background loading</p>	<p>All students are tracked across the literacy and numeracy continuums. Students are engaged in work placement with one student working with the Department of Environment and Heritage, the Indigenous ranger.</p> <p>Some SLSO support provided when attending cultural activities outside the school environment.</p> <p>Cultural significance is included in all activities in consultation with Aboriginal Elders. We provide a range of opportunities that enhance learning experiences eg. NAIDOC Week celebrations.</p> <p>Students continue to attend and represent the school at the local Aboriginal community activities eg. Sorry Day</p>	<p>SLSO support for School to Work Program.</p> <p>Extra resources for enrichment activities at NAIDOC cultural day.</p> <p>\$2110</p>
<p>Quality Teaching, Successful Students (QTSS)</p>	<p>Quality Teaching Successful Students funding has provided a little funding for the primary students. Because Gadara School has a much larger proportion of secondary students the amount of funding is used for staff to observe each others practice in literacy.</p>	<p>Staff release for collaborative practice.</p> <p>\$1,061</p>
<p>Socio-economic background</p>	<p>Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program</p> <p>Continued support from the local community in volunteering their time, resources and knowledge in the kitchen and the garden art activities.</p> <p>The program has continued to enhance students' access to a wider range of learning experiences and as a result this has increased the level of students' participation and their engagement in the activities and improved the wellbeing of the students – targeting a healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>Continue to employ a garden specialist half day once a fortnight.</p> <p>Transition to Work Program</p> <p>Continue to strengthen the partnerships between the school and local businesses.</p> <p>Employment of a job coach who continues to source job placements with local businesses and supports some students at placement. (Funding for this is from the Targeted Programs – Link)</p> <p>SLSOs continue to support students at work placement, although this is dependent on the student's need. This support usually is weekly.</p>	<p>Purchasing resources for the SAKGP</p> <p>SLSO support for students at work placement.</p> <p>\$30000</p>

Support for beginning teachers

Beginning Teachers Support funding has provided early career teachers with the ability to visit other special schools, undertake targeted professional learning appropriate to the needs of the teacher plus the needs of their students. Provide extra release time for the above plus programming support.

Attend Beginning Teachers Conferences.

Time to gather evidence and complete documentation for Accreditation reports.

Beginning Teacher Course

Teacher wages

Extra release

Observations at support classes at other special schools

\$9169



Student information

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boys	12	12	14	17
Girls	9	8	10	9

The school is secondary heavy with secondary students numbering 16 compared to 7 primary students enrolled.

Management of non-attendance

Non-attendance is managed at several levels. The school may be informed by the parent or carer via the following methods: communication books, school developed absentee forms and phone calls. Generally there is good communication between the school and home and non-attendance with out notice rarely occurs.

Structure of classes

The structure of classes at Gadara School:

1 Autism class

3 IO/IS classes

The Autism class is a mixture of year levels – Year 2–Year 9. The other three classes are populated based on stage levels.

Class 1 is a primary based class, Class 2 is a middle school based class and Class 3 is a senior class.

Retention Year 10 to Year 12

All secondary students undertake work placement in the local community generally from Year 10 onwards.

The work placement increases over the three years with students in Year 12 involved in Transition to post school opportunities for longer parts of the school day. This Transition to Work program is now providing students with valuable work skills that will be translated into their post school activities once they have left school.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	4.5
Teacher Librarian	0.17
School Administration & Support Staff	5.21
Other Positions	0.1

*Full Time Equivalent

At present one staff member at Gadara School identifies as being of Aboriginal Heritage, connecting with the local Wiradjuri and Wolgalu people.

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	10

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

All support staff and class teachers at Gadara School participate in professional learning activities with teachers maintaining a Professional Development Plan. Activities were undertaken at Staff Development Days, Staff Meetings and selected professional development courses.

Courses and activities were chosen in line with the school priorities as expanded upon in the school plan and the identified needs of the students in their classrooms.

One new scheme teacher is working towards Board of Studies Teaching and Education Standards accreditation.

One new scheme teacher is maintaining accreditation at Proficient.

SLSO training – implementation of programs and update of knowledge about disabilities and impact on students as well as courses such as Health Care Procedures.

Staff participated in professional learning on using data

to inform practice, incorporating the Literacy and Numeracy continuums, PLAN and Life Skills outcomes as a means to gather data for analysis and programming.

Financial Management, Oliver training, Performance Development Framework training and other student or staff specific focus training ensured all staff keep abreast of current practices. Staff also undertook mandatory training in CPR, Child Protection, Code of Conduct, Workplace Health and Safety and Anaphylaxis e-learning.

Financial information (for schools using OASIS for the whole year)

Financial information

This summary financial information covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

Income	\$
Balance brought forward	154 035.44
Global funds	103 174.64
Tied funds	90 907.44
School & community sources	35 346.72
Interest	2 738.80
Trust receipts	399.50
Canteen	0.00
Total income	386 602.54
Expenditure	
Teaching & learning	
Key learning areas	23 920.59
Excursions	700.00
Extracurricular dissections	20 657.05
Library	3 153.57
Training & development	14 900.86
Tied funds	115 846.91
Short term relief	28 054.38
Administration & office	20 592.03
School-operated canteen	0.00
Utilities	20 661.51
Maintenance	10 583.56
Trust accounts	388.50
Capital programs	0.00
Total expenditure	259 458.96
Balance carried forward	127 143.58

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

School performance

School-based assessment

At Gadara School there were no students in Years 3, 5, 7, 9 who sat the NAPLAN tests in 2016 for Literacy or Numeracy. Therefore, results cannot be advised in this report.

Gadara School has a school based assessment schedule that was developed in 2016.

The assessment schedule identifies assessments to be implemented for all students in literacy and numeracy across the school year.

The teachers also use PLAN for students from Kindergarten to Year 8 inclusive and then BOSTES Living Skills Worksheets that include all outcomes for students from Year 9 to Year 12 to collect data.

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program also has identified outcomes which the students are also assessed against.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

Each year schools are required to seek the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

Their responses are presented below.

In 2016, the school sought the opinions of parents and students about the school.

Their responses are presented below.

Parent satisfaction with Gadara School continues to be very high with parents either strongly agreeing or agreeing that Gadara School, as a learning community, is an attractive and well-resourced school that is connected to the community and welcomes parental involvement. They also indicated that parents are encouraged to contact the school to discuss concerns relating to their child. Parents also strongly agreed or agreed that students are the schools main concern and that Gadara School has competent teachers who set high standards and undertake training to upgrade their skills.

The staff of Gadara School are very proud of the school and the job that they are undertaking in educating their students. Staff are committed to setting high standards of achievement for all students that attend the school.



Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

Gadara School works hard to ensure that Aboriginal perspectives are embedded throughout the school programs in many ways.

This was achieved in 2016 by:

- Staff members ensuring that the Aboriginal perspectives are included in curriculum areas so

that Australian indigenous heritage is understood and celebrated appropriately.

- Celebrating NAIDOC week at Gadara School with A Cultural Day with visiting elders, artists and providing workshops for both students from Gadara School as well as Adelong PS, Talbingo PS and Brungle PS.
- We attended special cultural events, based our Education Week activity around the Aboriginal dreamtime story of The Rainbow Serpent and participated in the annual 'Proud and Deadly' awards for the Tumut area.
- Staff from the school attend all AECG meetings.



Multicultural and anti-racism education

At Gadara School we value the diverse multicultural nature of Australian society and celebrate the rich diversity of nationalities represented at our school. Multicultural perspectives are integrated across all Key Learning Areas. Units of work are linked to the achievements of outcomes through the study of countries, cultures and the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program.

Gadara School also participated in Harmony Day activities with Adelong PS with all students included, working in collaboration and understanding the message of Harmony Day, that everyone is valued and an important member of their school.

We have one staff member trained as an Anti-Racism Contact Officer who is available to improve understanding of cultural diversity or restorative practices when called upon.